

California Interfaith Power & Light

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STEERING COMMITTEE

California Council of Churches

Ecumenical Council
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Northern California
Interreligious
Conference

The Regeneration
Project

Southern California
Ecumenical Council

December 2, 2005

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Gov. Schwarzenegger,

At the United Nations World Environment Day in San Francisco last June, I stood with you and applauded when you sent a signal to the rest of the country – and to the world – that California is serious about reducing our contributions to global warming in a big way. You said: “I say the debate is over. We know the science. We see the threat. And we know the time for action is now.”

California Interfaith Power and Light agrees wholeheartedly and I am writing to urge you and your administration to move forward in implementing strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our state to meet your climate targets.

Our faith leaders support your goals: by 2010 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 2000 levels, by 2020 reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels, and by 2050 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels.

As the 9th largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world, California must set an example. Global warming threatens our economy, quality of life, and our health. Increased temperatures due to higher greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere threaten severe weather conditions, which in turn can affect water quality and supply, increase air pollution, and potentially lead to more cases of heat stress, infectious disease, asthma, respiratory and other health problems.

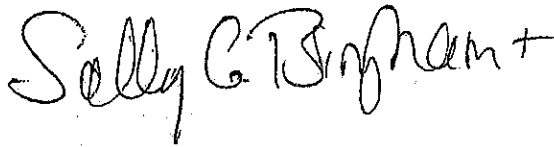
California will benefit from policies that support development and investment in clean, efficient energy and innovative technologies that will help our environment, create new jobs, and grow our economy. Companies can reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and save money. For example, DuPont has reduced GHG emissions by almost 70 percent since 1990 and realized a net savings \$2 billion dollars. IBM reduced GHG emissions by 65 percent realized a net savings of \$791 million. CalEPA estimates that worldwide demand for new technologies developed to reduce GHG emissions will create a global market potential of over \$180 billion annually.

California is uniquely positioned to take the lead on policies to address global warming. The state's policies should be based on a comprehensive analysis and robust public process, and should show how the different strategies will lead to attainment of all of the targets. **We urge you to support a mandatory cap on greenhouse gas emissions and an auctioned permit system which could generate significant revenue for the state of California.**

We can do it – and we must do it, for our children and grandchildren. We must start now and put our smartest scientists and engineers to work to develop clean, safe, affordable energy and transportation solutions.

You have our support, Governor Schwarzenegger and we will assist you in every way to help you implement your pledge.

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sally G. Bingham +". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev. Sally G. Bingham

cc: Allan Lloyd, CalEPA
Anne Baker, CalEPA
Eileen Tutt, CalEPA

**CLIMATE CHANGE HEARINGS
LOS ANGELES – JANUARY 31, 2006**

My name is Rev. Albert Cohen. I am Executive Director of the Southern California Ecumenical Council and am here representing that council of churches and an agency called California Interfaith Power and Light. We have been extremely concerned about degradation of the planet's atmosphere for over three decades.

For over thirty years the scientific community has been unrelenting in warning us that drastic climate change will be visited upon the planet if we do not take action to curb greenhouse gases and the resulting warming of the atmosphere and oceans. There have been two opposite reactions to the identification of the looming crisis. The struggle has been non-sectarian. On the one hand Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives, have supported business as usual with large public subsidies for petroleum and nuclear power. A vocal and effective business majority has built and sold bigger cars and trucks—with tax incentives given to those driving gas guzzlers. With a few exceptions for those who strive for fuel economy, the miles to the gallon expended by millions of vehicles, continue to hover in the teens and low twenties.

While we are spewing needless tons of hydrocarbons into the atmosphere, where there has been some power generation from sun, wind and conservation methods, these few, mostly private, investors have been sidelined, left off the grid, or basically run out of business because it has not been in the interest of the petroleum cartel to allow soft power to compete with their bottom line projections. There is talk about jobs. Friends, the jobs are with solar energy, which is a labor-intensive business. There are hundreds of thousands of sheet metal workers and plumbers and carpenters who could be gainfully employed in helping us save our planet from hurricanes and impending disaster. The most obvious solution to our energy problems is the conservation of energy. This works. Ask the companies who have demonstrated that by reducing their pollution, they end up saving energy which means saving money. IBM has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 2/3 and saved \$3/4 of a billion. Dupont has reduced emissions by 2/3 and saved \$2 billion. BP has reduced emissions by 10 % and saved \$2/3 of billion. Imagine the opportunities for growing the economy and putting people to work with that additional funding.

As for climate change, the signs of collapse of the global eco-system continue to multiply. As with canaries in the mines, frogs and other amphibians are dying off. Birds off the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State are starving to death. The top 300 feet of the Pacific Ocean has warmed and become denser. Dramatic changes in ocean currents have displaced fish. In the Arctic polar bears face extinction because there is less and less ice to support their foraging for seals. Ice sheets as big as states are breaking away from the Antarctica and are drifting north. Hurricanes get more ferocious and appear more frequently. Obvious massive change is taking place all around us. For the most part, we are engaged in business as usual thinking someone else will clean up our garbage.

The state's Climate Action Team has it right. We must act while it is still possible. There must be a mandatory, enforceable cap on emissions and it must be put in place now. We speak of all the sectors, transportation, electrical energy production and industry. This is a moral issue. The lives and welfare of our children and grandchildren are at stake. We know that the poor and those least able to adapt, suffer the most. Make no mistake: everyone, rich and poor, old and young will suffer if the present rate of climate change continues. What is the challenge to our generation, to those in decision-making positions of power? Scientists are saying that in order to stabilize the climate we need to reduce greenhouse gas emission to 80 % below 1990 levels. There will not be many more chances to head off the threatened breakdown of the systems which make life possible. Act now.

Rev. Albert G. Cohen, Southern California Ecumenical Council, scec1@scec1.net

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See "Plan B 2.0; Rescuing a Planet Under Stress" by Lester R. Brown, ISBN 0-393-32831-7
